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THE COLLECTOR

BY MAY SINCLAIR

Author of "The Divine Fire," "The Creators," etc.

WITH PICTURES BY HARRY RALEIGH

I HAVE known many collectors of celebrities, but none of them have been a patch on Mrs. Folyat-Rakes.

She was an old friend of my mother's; that was how I came to know her. I may have made it a little too apparent that it was filial piety that brought me to Cadogan Gardens, for she put me in my place at once by assuring me that I should always be welcome there for my dear mother's sake. If I had any illusions as to my footing, she destroyed them by the little air of mournful affection that explained my obscure presence, and condoned it. That was one of the ways by which she maintained her unspeakable prestige.

Yet I happened to know that she had inquired into my activities sufficiently to assure herself that I might ultimately have value. She was an infallible appraiser of values; she had the instinct of the auction-room, and I do not think that in a lifetime of collecting she had ever wasted as much as one "At Home" card.

She had been at the game for years when I first met her, so I can't tell you much about her beginnings, except that she was a daughter of Lord Braintree, and the widow of a man who had distinguished himself in the diplomatic service, which may have helped her.

Her success began in the early eighties, when going straight, with her flair, for the rarest, she secured Ford Lankester. He never could resist a woman if she was young, well born, and handsome, and when the daughter of Lord Braintree held out the laurels, he stooped his head and played very prettily at being crowned. After that, collecting became easy. She had only to write on her card, "To meet Mr. Ford Lankester," and she filled her big drawing-room in Cadogan Gardens. At one time she was said to have the finest collection in London. Only ten years ago everybody who was somebody was sure to be seen in it; not to be seen argued that you were nobody. Thus you were fairly terrorized into being seen. Even now, when most celebrities are smaller and the few big ones are getting shy, by dint of playing off one against the other she continues to collect.

But she is not so young as she was, nor yet so handsome, and other hostesses are in the business; she knows that one or two of the younger men—Grevill Burton, for instance—will not be seen inside her house, and she is getting nervous.

That is why her last adventure, the hunting of Watt Gunn, became the violent, disastrous, yet exciting spectacle it was.

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In the beginning she had no trouble in getting hold of him; it was far easier than her first triumph, the capture of Ford Lankester. As you know, Watt Gunn's greatness dropped on him suddenly, after he had been toiling for eight years in obscurity. Nobody, he said, was more surprised at it than himself. For eight years he had been writing things every bit as good as "*The New Aspasia*" without getting himself discovered. He was the son of a little draper at Surbiton, and had worked for eight years as his father's cashier. He used to say mournfully that he supposed his "grand mistake" was not going in for journalism. It was n't his grand mistake; it was his grand distinction, his superhuman luck. It kept him turning out one masterpiece after another, all fresh, with the dew on them, at an age when the talent of most novelists begins to turn gray. It kept him pure from any ulterior motive. Above all, it kept him from the clutches of the collector.

But it had this disadvantage, that when he did emerge, he emerged in a state of utter innocence, as naked of sophistication as when he was born. He had no suspicion of the dangers that lurked for him in Mrs. Folyat-Raikes's drawing-room. He did n't know that there were two kinds of celebrities, those who were too small to be asked there, and those who were too big to go. There was nobody to tell him that he was much too big. He went because he understood that he would meet the sort of people he had wanted all his life to meet.

He met first of all Furnival and me. It was touching how from the very first, and afterward in his extremity, he clung to us. Positively, it was as if then, before he had lost his crystalline simplicity, he had had some premonition of disaster, and felt subconsciously that we might save him. But it went, that pure and savage sense of his, in his first year.

I can see him now, sitting beside Mrs. Folyat-Raikes at the head of her beautiful mahogany table, always impeccably dressed, bright eyed, and a little flushed. I can see his hair,—he had never trained it,—which rose irrepressibly in a crest or comb from back to front along the top of his head, and his innocent mustache, which drooped as if it deprecated the behavior of his hair. I can see his shy, untutored

courtliness, his jerky aplomb, his little humorous, interrogative air, which seemed to say, "I 'm carrying it off pretty well for a chap that is n't used to it—my greatness, eh?" I seem to hear his guileless intonations; I follow, fascinated, the noble, reckless rush of his aitches as they fell through space; I taste the strange and piercing flavor of the accents that were his.

It seemed to me horrible, inconceivable, that he liked being there. And yet there can be no doubt that he did like it just at first. It gave him the things that he had missed, the opportunities. It satisfied his everlasting curiosity as to contemporary manners and the social scene. And just at first it did n't hurt him. He continued to produce, with a humor and a freshness unimpaired, those inimitable annals of his class.

In his second year Watt Gunn had made his way everywhere. He did n't push. He was so frightfully celebrated that he had no need to. He was pushed. The mass bore down on him. Competition had set in. All the collectors in the western and southwestern districts contended with Mrs. Folyat-Raikes for the possession of Watt Gunn. But she held her own, for he was grateful to her. You saw her sweep by, haggard with pursuit, but trailing Watt Gunn on the edge of her sagging, voluminous, Victorian gowns.

It was pitiful to watch the gradual sophistication of the naïf creature, his polishing and hardening under the social impact, and the blunting of his profound and primal instincts. They clipped his wings, among them, and the wings of his wild aitches. Very soon he lost his shyness and his tingling cockney flavor.

Presently his work began to suffer. It was becoming more brilliant, more astoundingly intellectual, but the dewiness and the divine simplicity were going.

We, Grevill Burton, Furnival, and I, told him so.

He knew it, and he knew the cause of it, but he defended himself. When we said, "For God's sake, keep out of it!" he said he could n't.

"I want," he said, "to get the hang of the thing. If I 'm going to draw the upper classes, I must see what they 're like. I can't invent 'em. Who could?"

And when Furny told him for his good that he was a snob at bottom, he merely said: "Of course I am. Who is n't?"



Drawn by Harry Raleigh

"IF ONLY, HE MOANED, HE COULD CURL UP AND CREEP
BACK INTO OBSCURITY AGAIN"

And there was some truth in it. I do not think that, except at the very last, he was ever able to forget that Mrs. Folyat-Raikes was a daughter of Lord Braintree.

But he had his moments of terrible lucidity. What was the matter with him, he would say, was simply his damned celebrity. He could n't get rid of it. If only, he moaned, he could curl up and creep back into obscurity again. But he could n't. It was, he said, as if a rose should shut and be a bud again.

And so the rose went on expanding till it began to fade, and its leaves fell one by one on Mrs. Folyat-Raikes's drawing-room floor.

His publishers saw nothing wrong with the novel he brought out in his third year. It sold all right; but he was thoroughly frightened. As if it had been the first symptom of a retributive malady, that novel sobered him. You see, he was not a snob at bottom, only at the top. At bottom he was a very serious artist, and he had realized his appalling danger.

And then the great fight began. It lasted two years, and was made hideous by an element of personal virulence on both sides, secret, but profound. Secret, that is, at first. At first Mrs. Folyat-Raikes was merely unscrupulous, and Watt Gunn merely evasive. He lied, but with no hope of really deceiving her. He would refuse three invitations running on

the plea that he was out of town. He was n't, and she knew it, and he knew that she knew it, and that she would forgive him anything. Then because he was a kind little chap at heart and hated to hurt people, he would dine with her twice running to make up. And their mutual fear and hostility would smolder. Then her clutches would tighten, and he would break loose again madly. His excuses became disgraceful, preposterous, fantastic. A child could have seen through them.

So I was n't in the least surprised when he came to me one day and told me that he'd got appendicitis. He was going into a nursing home, he said, on the fourteenth.

"You mean," I said, "that Mrs. Raikes has a dinner-party on the fifteenth to which you are invited."

He said he meant that he was going.

He said it in that rather hoarse, rather squeaky voice of his that carried conviction. There was about him a morbid exaltation and excitement. I was to tell everybody that he was going.

And he went. I called to see him three days after. His nursing home—I'm not going to tell you exactly where it was, but it was in a beautiful green square, with lots of trees in it. I found him established in a lofty room on the first floor. He was sitting up in bed by the window, flushed and bright-eyed, looking at the trees, simply looking at them.

I could n't at first detach him from his contemplation of the square garden. He said he liked it; it was "so jolly bosky." "And, oh, Simpson, the peace, the blessed peace of it!" He had his fountain-pen and writing-pad in bed with him, but he had n't written a line. He said he was too happy.

I inquired about his appendicitis. He shook his head gravely, and said that an operation was not considered necessary at present; but that he would have to stay in the nursing home for five or six weeks to make sure.

"Five or six weeks, Simpson; longer, perhaps. In fact, I don't know when I shall be out."

I told him he 'd be bored to death and that he could n't stand it. But he said no; he was happier in that nursing home than he had been for years. They did n't treat him a bit like a celebrity, and all he wanted was to lie there and have his hair brushed.

He lay there three weeks, and I suppose he had his chair brushed, for it lay flatter, which gave him a look of extraordinary well-being and peace. And at the end of three weeks he came to me in my studio by night. Grevill Burton and Furnival were there, and he simply threw himself on our mercy. He said he was still supposed to be in the nursing home. Yes, I was right. He had n't been able to stand it. It was all very well at first. He 'd liked having his hair brushed,—the little nurse who brushed it was distinctly pretty,—but he 'd got tired of it in a week. He 'd squared the sister and the nurses and the doctor—squared 'em all round, and if anybody inquired for him at the home, they 'd hear that Mr. Watt Gunn's condition was about the same, and that he was not allowed to see anybody. If Furny liked to put a paragraph in that rag of his about his condition being the same, he might.

Thus, with a delicious, childlike joy in his own ingenuity, he spun the first threads of the tangle that afterward immeshed him.

He went down into the country to write a book. Nobody but Burton and I (we could n't trust Furny) knew where he was. Officially, he was in the nursing home. Mrs. Folyat-Raikes called there every day, and brought back the bulletin,

and published it all round. He 'd reckoned on that.

Well, he kept it up for weeks, months. Burton and I went down to see him in September. We found him chuckling over the success of his plot. He admitted it had been a bit expensive. His three weeks in the home, at fifteen guineas a week, had come to forty-five pounds. With doctors and one thing and another the game had cost him over seventy. But it was, he said, money well invested. It would mean hundreds and thousands of pounds in his pocket—a hundred pounds, he 'd calculated, for every week he was supposed to be still there. He 'd finished his book, and if he could keep it up only a few months longer, he thought he could easily do another. He was so fit, he said, he could do 'em on his head.

It struck me there was something ominous in his elation. For the thing presently began to leak out. I swear it was n't through me or Burton or even Furny; but, you see, the entire staff of the nursing home was in the secret, and the nurses may have talked to patients; you don't have Watt Gunn in a nursing home for nothing. Anyhow, I was rung up one day by Mrs. Folyat-Raikes. I heard her uncanny telephone voice saying, "Do you know what has become of Mr. Watt Gunn?" I answered as coolly as I could that I did n't.

And then the voice squeaked in my ear, "I hear he 's broken down completely and gone away, leaving no address."

I called a taxi then and there, and went round to Cadogan Gardens. I found the poor lady wilder and more haggard than ever. You may imagine what it meant to her.

She dropped her voice to tell me that her information was authentic. Mr. Watt Gunn was not in the nursing home. He never had been in a nursing home at all. She had not written to him because she understood that letters were not allowed in the institution.

That was where Watt Gunn's ingenuity had landed him. The story was all over London in three days. She was bound to spread it to account for his non-appearance at her parties. You could n't stop it. It had got into the papers. And though Watt Gunn's publisher, in view of his forthcoming novel, published emphatic



Color-Tone, engraved for THE CENTURY, by H. C. Merill and H. Davidson

"THERE WAS A LONG, CLEAR SPACE BETWEEN HER AND WATT GUNN,
AND SHE WAS BEARING DOWN ON 'US'"

DRAWN BY HARRY RALEIGH

contradictions, nobody believed them. And when the book, his masterpiece, came out, the effect on his royalties was lamentable. In America it simply ruined him.

He tried desperately to recover, to live it down. He had some scheme of going on a lecturing tour in the States; but his agents made inquiries, and advised him not to. A lecturing tour in the States, they said, at the present juncture would prove a miserable fiasco, even if he could effect a landing. He, the darling of the American public, whose triumph on "the other side" had been a gorgeous fairy-tale,

It was sharper because of the peace that he had known. I can't tell you all Mrs. Folyat-Raikes's ruses, and Watt Gunn's revolts and flights, his dastardly and pitiable shifts. He had, I believe, a matrimonial project which he abandoned as too drastic, besides being probably ineffectual. And then he did a really clever thing. It served him for a whole season.

I ought to tell you that Mrs. Folyat-Raikes was the most straight-laced hostess of her generation. Nobody was admitted to her house who had once figured in a scandal. And Watt Gunn had never fig-



Drawn by Harry Raleigh

"ALL HE WANTED WAS TO LIE THERE AND HAVE
HIS HAIR BRUSHED"

saw himself returned on his country's hands as an insane alien.

His American publisher, terrified by these rumors, came over himself for the sole purpose of seeing what was the matter with Watt Gunn, and despite all that Burton, Furnival, and I could tell him, he was not altogether reassured. He went about too much. Besides, by this time Watt Gunn had got so nervy over it all that his behavior lent itself to suspicion.

Then the poor little chap persuaded himself that his only chance was to be seen again at Mrs. Folyat-Raikes's. For the next three months he was seen there and everywhere. Furry published a funny account of the whole thing, and Watt Gunn was ultimately reinstated. And the struggle and the agony began all over again.

ured, had never desired to figure; he could n't, he used to say, be bored. Really, he had preserved the virtues and traditions of his class, besides being constitutionally timid in seductive presences. Then suddenly and conspicuously, in the beginning of the season, he figured. He appeared—you may remember it—as co-respondent in a rather bad divorce case. There were three other co-respondents, but they had been kept out of it in the interests of Watt Gunn. I don't know how he had worked it; anyhow, the little chap appeared, wearing his borrowed purple with an air of reckless magnificence in sin. I can see him now, solemn and flushed with the weight and importance of it, stalking slowly up the staircase of the Old Marlborough Club, trailing that gorgeous

iniquity. He had the look of a man who has completely vindicated himself.

He spoke of it in the smoke-room,—we were dining with him,—and he said it had been an awful bore, but he did n't grudge the time and trouble. He had been a benefactor to two miserable people who wanted to get rid of each other, he had saved three happy homes from a devastating scandal,—the three other correspondents were married men,—and incidentally he had saved himself.

He had, but not for long. His next book had a furious success on the strength of the divorce suit. He was ten times more celebrated and ten times more valuable. Somebody told Mrs. Folyat-Raikes that it had been a put-up job, and that Watt Gunn had been made use of. She found extenuating circumstances. She said to Furnival and me, "We must save him from those dreadful people." She meant that she must.

And then Watt Gunn turned nasty. He refused every invitation, not taxing his invention in the least, and sometimes employing a secretary. Mrs. Folyat-Raikes was reduced to hunting him in other people's houses and at public dinners. She was to be seen rushing through vast reception-rooms when they were emptying, haggard in her excitement, trailing her Victorian skirts and shawls and laces. Or you found her wedged in the packing crowd, lifting her eternal lorgnon. And she would seize you as you passed and cry: "They tell me Mr. Watt Gunn is here. I'm looking for Mr. Watt Gunn."

He had become dangerous to hunt. He stuck at nothing. Poor hunted thing, he showed his origin by brutal "noes," irritable snarlings, and turnings of his little round back. But he had managed to write and publish "Revolution." He had escaped her clutches for a whole year.

At last she tracked him down at the Abadam's. He was there because I'd brought him. I'd found old Abadam worth cultivating. I had a one-man show on that week, and he'd bought three of my things the year before. Besides, they'd engaged some Russian dancers, and we could n't resist that.

Furnival and Grevill Burton came with us, and when we caught sight of Mrs. Folyat-Raikes, we closed round Watt Gunn. He is n't tall, but she was bound

to spot him in the crowd, his hair was so funny.

I don't think he saw her all at once. It was in the big reception-room up-stairs, after the dancers had gone, when people were trickling down to supper. There was a long, clear space between her and Watt Gunn, and she was bearing down on us.

Furny got hold of his left arm, and by exerting a gentle pressure we hoped to get him decorously away. But that startled him,—he was fearfully jumpy,—and he looked round. She was then within five yards of him.

You never saw more frantic terror on any human face. I don't know exactly what he did; but he broke loose from Furnival somehow,—I think he ducked,—and then he bolted. We saw him going clean through people, and making for a door there was on his right.

Furnival and I took Mrs. Folyat-Raikes down to supper by way of covering his retreat. There was only one other thing to do, and that was to sacrifice Grevill Burton—to throw him to her. This, I can see now, was what we ought to have done,—it was the only thing that would have taken her mind off Watt Gunn,—but at the time it seemed too hard on Burton.

So Furny and I took her down to supper. We'd got the same plan in our heads, quite a good one. We were to land her well inside the dining-room. Furny was to hold her in play while I foraged for iced coffee and fruit salad and *pâté de foie gras*. The idea was to keep her feeding long enough to give Watt Gunn a chance.

Well, it did n't come off. In the first place, the room was crammed, and we could n't get her far enough in. Then, after she'd sent me for iced coffee, she changed her mind and wanted champagne cup, and told Furny to go and get it. Like a fool, he went; and before we could get back to her, if you'll believe me, she'd slipped out.

What must have happened next we heard afterward from Watt Gunn.

I ought to tell you that she had this advantage over him, that she knew the house, and he did n't. It's in Great Cumberland Place, and Abadam had pulled half of it down, and built it up again over

the back garden. There were galleries in it, and bedroom suites, and twisty corridors, and little staircases where you least expected them. The door Watt Gunn had disappeared through led into the library, and the library led into the Italian room, and the Italian room into the Japanese room, and the Japanese room into Mrs. Abadam's boudoir.

Mrs. Folyat-Raikes's first movement was comparatively simple. It was to go back up the big front staircase, and, avoiding the reception-room, enter the library where Watt Gunn was, through the door that gave upon the landing.

Watt Gunn was all alone in the library. He had found a comfortable arm-chair under the electric ring, and he was reading. He had his back to the door. Mrs. Folyat-Raikes went in by, but he says he felt it in his spine that she was there. That door was near and at right angles to the door of the reception-room, so that he had only one way of escape—the door into the Italian room. He took it.

He says that the rest of his flight through Abadam's house was like an abominable dream. He was convinced that Mrs. Folyat-Raikes was following him. He closed every door behind him, and he felt her following him. He went slap through the Italian room, at a hard gallop, into the Japanese room. The Japanese room was difficult to negotiate because of the screens that were about. He saw Buddhas smiling and frightful gods and samurais grinning at him as he dashed into Mrs. Abadam's boudoir. He had had the presence of mind to switch the electric light off behind him as he went; but there was no light in the boudoir. He went tumbling over things; he trod on a cat, and upset a table and a cage with Mrs. Abadam's parrot in it. He says he thought that he heard a screen go down in the Japanese room as he left it, and that frightened him.

At the far end of the boudoir there was a little door. It was ajar, and a light showed in the opening. He rushed through, slamming the door behind him, and found himself on a narrow landing at the foot of a little spiral staircase. On his left, another little staircase went twisting away to the floor below. Watt Gunn didn't know it, but these were the almost secret stairs leading to Mrs. Abadam's

private apartments. He said he thought they were the back stairs.

We asked him later on whether at any moment of his flight, after he had broken loose from us, he had seen Mrs. Folyat-Raikes pursuing him. And he said no, not exactly; not, that was to say, with his eyes. He saw her with his spine. He says that, as far as he could describe his sensations, long, wriggling, fibrous threads—feelers, he called them—went streaming out backward from each one of his vertebrae, and that by means of them he knew that she was after him. He says that when he slammed the door of the boudoir, these feelers recoiled, and lashed him up the spiral staircase. He came out, at the corner of a long corridor, into what he took to be the servants' quarters, where, if anywhere, he would be safe.

There was a door at each end of the corridor. The nearer one was open, disclosing a housemaid's cupboard; but the passage through it was obstructed by the housemaid. The corridor gave him a clear course for sprinting, so he made at top speed for the farther door.

It took him straight into Mrs. Abadam's bath-room.

His first thought was wonder at the marvelous luck that had landed him just there, in the most secret, the most absolutely safe position, in the whole house, where, without incurring grave suspicion, he could lock himself in.

There were three doors, the one he'd come by, one leading into Abadam's dressing-room, and one into Mrs. Abadam's bedroom. He locked them all, the outer door first, then the bedroom door, then, to make himself, as he put it, impregnable, the inner door of the dressing-room. Beyond it was Abadam's bedroom.

He says he never saw anything like that bath-room, neither could he have imagined it. It was worth the whole adventure just to have seen it once. He could have spent hours in it, going round and looking at things. It was all white tiles, white porcelain, and silver fittings. There was a great porcelain bath in one corner, and a shower-bath in another, with white-silk mackintosh curtains all round it; and a recess all fitted up with sprays—rose sprays, and needle sprays that you could direct on to any part of you you chose. There was a couch where you could lie

and be massaged; oh, and an immense linen cupboard let into the wall, with hot water-pipes running up and down it.

There was n't a detail of that bath-room that he missed, and he seems to have made considerable explorations in Abadam's dressing-room, too.

But just at first he kept pretty quiet. He lay on the couch, and gave himself up to the great white peace and purity of it all. He had n't any idea in his head, or any plan. It was only when the maid came to get Mrs. Abadam's bath ready, and began trying all the doors, that he noted, and then it was by an ungovernable impulse.

It was the sight of the beautiful white porcelain bath that made him do it, and possibly the feeling that he had got to account for being there. Anyhow, before he really knew what he was about, he'd turned on the hot water, undressed, and got into the bath.

It might have been better, he said afterward, if he'd got into the linen cupboard and kept quiet; but the rushing of the hot water covered him, and made him feel so safe. More than all, he wanted to wash those infernal feelers off his spine.

So he splashed about; and when he was tired of splashing, he just lay and soaked, turning on the water hot and hot. And when he was tired of the big bath, he tried the shower-bath, just to see what it was like.

It was what the shower-bath did to him that put his idea into his head.

You see, he'd got to get out of the house somehow, and he did n't quite know how. He supposed it would have to be through one of the bedrooms, down the big front staircase, through the great hall where everybody would be collected, and he did n't want to be recognized.

Remember, he had the range of Abadam's dressing-room.

He could n't have been up there more than five and twenty minutes when Abadam came to me in the supper-room and took me aside mysteriously. When I saw his face, I knew it was all up with my picture-show. He was followed by a young footman. He said:

"It was you who brought that fellow, Watt Gunn, here, was n't it?"

I said it was, and that Mrs. Abadam—but he cut me short. He said:

"He's been having supper."

I stared, because that was precisely what he had n't had, poor chap!

"He's been having supper, and he's got into my wife's bath-room and he won't come out."

We sneaked out of the dining-room, Abadam and Furnival and I. The young footman led us up the back stairs and through a door—the door by the housemaid's cupboard where Watt Gunn had seen the housemaid standing, and so into the corridor.

We found a small crowd gathered before the bath-room door. There was Mrs. Abadam's maid, with a nightgown and a loose wrapper over her arm, and a pair of gorgeous slippers in her hand. She was trying to look indignant and superior. There were the upper housemaid, the under housemaid, and Abadam's valet. The girls were sniggering and giggling, while the valet endeavored to parley respectfully with Watt Gunn through the bath-room door. And you could hear Watt Gunn's voice, all irascible and squeaky, coming through the door:

"'Ang it all, I can't come until you tell me—"

Abadam said: "What's that he says?"

The valet put his ear to the door.

"He says he can't come out, sir. He says he wants to know if Mrs.—Mrs.—What's the name, sir?—Mrs. Folyat-Raikes is still here, sir. He seems to have got her on his mind, sir."

"Tell him he can't see Mrs. Raikes. He is n't in a fit state."

You could hear Watt Gunn still squeaking frantically and the valet parleying and interpreting.

"He says he does n't want to see her, sir. And—what's that, sir? Oh, he does n't want her to see him, sir."

Abadam said he was glad he was sober enough for that. We could n't hear what Watt Gunn said, but we heard the valet.

"I'm sure I can't tell you, sir. He won't open the door for me, sir."

Then Abadam turned savagely on me.

"Here, see what you can do, Simpson. You brought him in, and it's up to you to get him out."

I wriggled through to the door.

"It's all right, old chap," I said. "You can come out now." I could just hear his small, thin voice saying:

"That you, Simpson? Is *she* there?" I said:

"Of course she is n't. Can't you see where you are? You're in Mrs. Abadam's bath-room."

He said:

in Abadam's dressing-room. He'd got hold of the wax that Abadam uses, and he'd twisted up the ends of his little mustache till it looked as ferocious as the German emperor's. And he was wearing Abadam's dressing-gown, blue brocade



Drawn by Harry Raleigh

"MRS. FOLYAT-RAIKES WAS REDUCED TO HUNTING HIM IN OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES"

"I know that. If you'll swear it's all right, I'll open the door."

I did swear, and he opened the door, and we all saw him.

That's to say, we saw a figure. You could n't have known it was Watt Gunn. His hair was parted in the middle, and lay flat down, all sleeked by the shower-bath and by some odorous oil that he'd found

with crise collar and cuffs. I daresay it was n't a bit too big for Abadam,—he's the tall kind, all legs and arms, over and above his nose,—but it had swallowed up Watt Gunn at one mouthful, all but his sleek little head and the terrifying, upturned mustache, and it trailed on the floor behind him.

I don't suppose he knew what he looked



"WATT GUNN STILL STOOD IN THE BATH-ROOM DOOR AND
GLARED AT US OVER HIS MUSTACHE"

like, but from the expression of Abadam's face as he gazed at him I conceived a faint hope for my show.

The servants, being well-trained, had fled at the first sight of him; all except the valet, who was officially entitled to remain.

Watt Gunn still stood in the bath-room door and glared at us over his mustache.

He said, when we'd quite done laughing, perhaps we'd tell him how he was to get out of that confounded place without being seen. We told him first of all to get into his own clothes; but when he'd got into them, he still insisted that he did n't want to be seen. His mind was running on Mrs. Folyat-Raikes.

Abadam said it would be very unpleasant for everybody if he *was* seen; and we said of course he must n't be. Abadam,

with the idea he had and his fear of unpleasantness, played beautifully into our hands.

And so we got him away, down the back stairs, through the basement, and out up the area steps, wearing the butler's light covert-coat over his own dress-suit.

Burton declares that he saw Mrs. Folyat-Raikes in the distance, sweeping through the reception-room and crying: "I'm looking for Mr. Watt Gunn. Has anybody seen Mr. Watt Gunn?"

And the Abadams go about saying that Watt Gunn drinks. They say he has it in bouts, and that he retires periodically to a home for inebriates somewhere near Leith Hill.

But even that has n't done him any good. He is more celebrated than ever.